

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4056

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 12105

EXDIS

USSALTTWO

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PARM
SUBJECT; HIGHLIGHTS, ROWNY/SHCHUKIN DINNER PARTY
DISCUSSIONS (A-1927) (SALT TWO - 1550)

1. DETERRENCE. SHCHUKIN SAID HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH SENATOR CULVER'S BROAD GRASP OF MILITARY, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THIS HAD TRIGGERED SHCHUKIN'S THINKING ABOUT US CONCERNS OVER ICBM VULNERABILITY. SHCHUKIN SAID THAT IN THE US DECISION-MAKERS LOOK AT THINGS RATIONALLY WHEREAS IN THE USSR SUCH SITUATIONS ARE DECIDED IN THE CONTEXT OF GEOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND HISTORICAL TRENDS. HE SAID HE UNDERSTANDS THE US CONCEPT OF DETERRENCE AND PERSONALLY HAS NO DOUBT BUT THAT US RESIDUAL FORCES, UNDER ANY IMAGINABLE SCENARIO, WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO DEVASTATE THE SOVIET UNION. HE ADDED THAT ONLY THE SOVIET MILITARY HAVE WRITTEN ON THE SOVIET CONCEPT OF DETERRENCE AND THAT HE COULD NOT FAULT PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE SOVIET UNION FOR THINKING THAT THE SOVIETS

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BELIEVED IN A "WAR WINNING" STRATEGY SINCE THAT WAS ALL THE SOVIETS HAD PUBLISHED.

2. I TOLD SHCHUKIN I HAD HEARD HIM OFTEN USE THE EXPRESSIONS "GEOGRAPHIC AND HISTORIC FACTORS" AND WAS STILL NOT CLEAR WHAT THIS MEANT. SHCHUKIN SAID THE SOVIETS USE THE TERM "GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS" AS A CONVENIENT CATCH-ALL

TO ANSWER ALL SORTS OF ARGUMENTS AND THAT IT ALLUDES TO THE USSR BEING A LANDLOCKED NATION WITH FEW SEA OUTLETS AND TO THE THREAT POSED BY THE SOVIETS' EUROPEAN AND CHINESE NEIGHBORS.

3. AS FOR HISTORICAL FACTORS, SHCHUKIN RECOUNTED SOVIET HISTORY, STARTING WITH THE TARTAR INVASION, DETAILING THE NAPOLEONIC INVASION, THE CRIMEAN WAR, THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, THE SOVIET REVOLUTION OF 1917, AND ENDING WITH WORLD WAR II. THE MAIN THREAD OF HIS LESSON WAS THAT THE RUSSIANS HAD A LONG HISTORY OF DEFENDING THEMSELVES ON THEIR OWN SOIL AND WERE CONDITIONED TO DEFENDING THEIR HOMELAND LARGELY BY THE USE OF LARGE LAND FORCES. THEY HAD ALSO OFTEN EXPERIENCED DEFEATS WHENEVER THEY HAD GONE BEYOND THEIR BORDERS. THESE FACTORS, HE SAID, CONTRIBUTED TO THE CURRENT SOVIET INFERIORITY COMPLEX. TO OVERCOME THIS COMPLEX HIGH-PLACED MILITARY PEOPLE--AND MOST SOVIET LEADERS ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES WITH THE MILITARY--FIND IT EASY TO GATHER SUPPORT FOR MAINTAINING LARGE FORCES. SHCHUKIN SAID THAT THIS WAS CONVENIENT, BECAUSE EVEN THOSE WHO WERE NOT FEARFUL OF INVASION SAW THE POLITICAL UTILITY OF MAINTAINING LARGE FORCES.

4. I TOLD SHCHUKIN I COULD FOLLOW THE RATIONALE FOR LARGE CONVENTIONAL FORCES SINCE THEIR JUSTIFICATION COULD BE ARGUED MILITARILY, BUT I WONDERED IF HE SAW THIS SAME
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CONCEPT APPLYING TO LARGE STRATEGIC FORCES. HE SAID THAT THE NECESSITY FOR STRATEGIC FORCES OCCURRED AFTER WORLD WAR II AS A REACTION TO THE INTRODUCTION OF WESTERN STRATEGIC FORCES WHICH WERE TRYING TO MAKE UP FOR THE INFERIORITY OF THEIR CONVENTIONAL FORCES. IT WAS NATURAL, HE SAID, THAT SOVIET STRATEGIC FORCES WOULD BE STRUCTURED ON CONCEPTS DEVELOPED FOR CONVENTIONAL FORCES SINCE SOVIET LEADERS RESPONSIBLE FOR DECIDING ON SUCH FORCES HAD EXPERIENCE ONLY WITH CONVENTIONAL FORCES. STRATEGIC FORCES ALSO HAD POLITICAL UTILITY IF THERE WAS THE RIGHT COMBINATION OF INTERNAL NATIONAL WILL AND EXTERNAL PERCEPTIONS. BUT, HE ADDED, THIS STILL NEEDED A FOUNDATION OF CREDIBLE FORCES.

5. SALT II AND SUBSEQUENT NEGOTIATIONS. SHCHUKIN SAID THAT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES WE NEEDED SOMEHOW TO GET A SALT II AGREEMENT BEHIND US AND START THE PROCESS TOWARD FURTHER QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE LIMITATIONS. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD IT WOULD NOT BE EASY TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL. EVEN SENATOR CULVER, WHO OBVIOUSLY FAVORED A SALT AGREEMENT, HE SAID, SAW DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE OF US FIXED ICBM VULNERABILITY AND US PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOVIETS. AS AN

ASIDE SHCHUKIN NOTED THAT ONLY THE MORE LIBERAL SENATORS HAD VISITED US; HE WONDERED WHY CONSERVATIVE SENATORS DID NOT COME TO GENEVA.

6. SHCHUKIN REPEATED THAT IF WE COULD SOMEHOW GET BEYOND SALT II WE COULD START A PROCESS TO GET SOVIET THINKING ON A RATIONAL BASIS. HOWEVER, HE THOUGHT THERE WAS NOT MUCH HOPE OF CHANGING CURRENT SOVIET THINKING UNTIL THE "NEW BREED" TOOK OVER. THERE WERE A FEW "BRIDGES" FROM THE CURRENT TO THE NEW BREED, HE SAID, NAMING DOBRYNIN, KORNIYENKO AND KOMPLEKTOV. "THESE ENGINEERS," HE ADDED, LAMENTED THE SOVIET UNION'S POOR STANDARD OF LIVING AND

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 GENEVA 12105

EXDIS/USSALTTWO

CURRENT 12 PERCENT" OF THEIR G.N.P. INTO NON-MILITARY EXPENDITURES. HE SAID THE USSR NEEDED A SALT AGREEMENT BECAUSE OF THE NEED TO OPEN UP TRADE. WITHOUT TRADE THERE COULD BE LITTLE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, WITHOUT WHICH THE USSR COULD NOT CONTINUE TO BE A MAJOR POWER. HE ENVISAGED SERIOUS SOVIET MANPOWER SHORTAGES IN THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS WHICH WOULD PUT PRESSURE ON REDUCING THEIR FORCES, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONVENTIONAL FIELD.

7. SHCHUKIN SAID THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF GETTING A SALT II AGREEMENT WAS LARGELY CONDITIONED BY THREE FACTORS: (1) AN INABILITY OF THE CURRENT SOVIET LEADERSHIP TO SHOW MUCH FLEXIBILITY; (2) PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOVIET UNION IN THE UNITED STATES; AND (3) OTHER WORLD EVENTS SUCH AS CURRENT US-USSR DIFFERENCES OVER THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION.

8. THROUGHOUT THE EVENING SHCHUKIN WAS RELAXED, FRANK AND TALKATIVE. I WOULD ESTIMATE HE DID 90 PERCENT OF THE TALKING. HE ENDED ON A NOTE OF CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM THAT BY DOING OUR BEST WE WOULD "SOMEHOW ARRIVE" AT A SALT II

AGREEMENT BECAUSE "IT HAD TO BE." SUCH AN AGREEMENT, HE
SAID, WOULD THUS START THE PROCESS TOWARD REAL PROGRESS
IN SALT III. EARLE

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